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The University of Richmond  
Department of Rhetoric and Communication Studies  
Honors Thesis

**Illuminating a Space for Woman and Rhetoric**

By  
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## Illuminating a Space for Woman and Rhetoric

My overarching concerns are for the place and power of women in rhetoric and democracy.<sup>1</sup> This concern developed during my study of classical rhetoric, when I noticed an obvious absence of women in rhetoric. For example, John Poulakos and Takis Poulakos state that any “ordinary person” could play a role on the political stage in Athens (34). This reference to “ordinary people” is proof that women were made invisible because, as George A. Kennedy explains, in classical Athens, democracy was only for “an assembly of all adult male citizens” (16). Male citizens, then, were actually rather *extra-ordinary*. Because democracy was only for “an assembly of all adult male citizens,” and because rhetorical theory developed to meet the needs of the new democracy, it developed to meet the needs only of “an assembly of all adult male citizens.”

Although scholars such as Poulakos and Poulakos eclipse the absence of women, choosing only to glorify rhetoric and its role in democracy, some scholars have worked to make visible the ways in which women’s absence in rhetoric has been made invisible within the structures and ideologies embodied in the histories of rhetoric. Scholars such as Jane Donawerth (2002) and Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama (1997) explain that a history is not just facts and events, but a subjective interpretation of facts and events by the writer of that history, often a person in power, often a man. Because of this, Adriana Cavarero (1995) explains, women are either absent from history, or depicted as ignorant and naïve. John Schilb states that this causes canononia, or “the

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<sup>1</sup> My narrative voice is inspired by the call Helene Cixous makes for woman to write herself in and through her voice and her body (1986).

impulse to boil rhetorical history down to a particular set of cherished texts, an official heritage” (131).

Although scholars have worked to correct this absence, they are often unable to do so without falling victim to the very structures of patriarchy they wish to escape. For instance, many scholars attempt to combat women’s absence and inferiority in the history of rhetoric by simply adding them into the history,<sup>2</sup> using what Barbara Biesecker calls the “affirmative action approach” (144). This then leads to female tokenism, where a few “token” women are recognized within rhetoric, giving people the impression that women at large were actually allowed to participate in the public sphere of rhetorical practices, but the majority of women were not allowed to have such extensive participation.

So, critical historiography *has* drawn attention to general structures of patriarchy in the history of rhetoric and in particular its relationship with democracy. Yet scholars seem to be at a standstill, unable to escape the structures of patriarchy within rhetoric to find a space for woman. This leaves me with an overwhelming curiosity about how these structures of patriarchy came to spirit the space of rhetoric in the first place. A mere critical historiography cannot present answers to this question. I must go to the space of rhetoric for a closer look. A close examination of particulars of this space will heighten our insight into the gender differentials in the classical structure of rhetoric and its inextricable link to western democracy.

Most assume that in the practice of rhetoric, rhetoric is situational. This is self-evident. A basic axiom driving the field of rhetoric is that rhetoric must be studied in

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Campbell (1989), Bizzell & Herzburg (1990) and Donawerth (2002).

context. Yet theories of rhetoric are and are not developed from this axiom. On the one hand, theorists talk about such things as modes of proof in each particular case, but on the other hand, all this talk is within a book. With all due respect, a book is not the situation of rhetoric. As rhetoric has been legitimated in and through literary practices, such as book writing, it has become more and more removed from its literal situation, its physical performance, its place and space. Richard Leo Enos explains that understanding this urges one to get out of the literary by walking from the aisle of the library shelves and going into the field for on-site research. In walking this way, one experiences non-traditional sources of evidence existing outside of the 'book' tradition, and one discovers evidence through fieldwork (Enos). In this way, advances in the history and theory of rhetoric will occur by extending the range of our primary resources as well as the depths (Enos).

The obvious place to begin is inside the Athenian model of democracy, which, according to dominant histories of rhetoric, gave rise to rhetoric as a guiding idea and practice of the public democratic sphere. I focus specifically on the ancient Greek agora, for it contains, as is well known, not only the Bema, or rhetor's platform, but the Boule, where citizens assembled to deliberate. My work is spirited by the ancient geographer Pausanias who traveled throughout Greece and wrote descriptions of many of the buildings that he saw. He, like other Greek historians at the time, approached places holistically, not objectively. He was, as E.V Walter (1998) points out, among the original ancient Greek theorists, where "theory" derives from archaic notions of "theoria" which meant seeing the sights, seeing for yourself, and getting a worldview. The first theorists were "tourists"-the wise men who traveled to inspect the obvious world-Solon,

Herodotus, Hecataeus, Pausanias. These wise men were theorists in that they engaged "a complex but organic mode of active observation-a perceptual system that included asking questions, listening to stories and local myths, and feelings as well as hearing and seeing" (Walter 18). This kind of seeing encouraged an open reception to every kind of emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative, and sensory experience-a holistic practice of thoughtful awareness that engaged all the senses and feelings. These tourists were spectators who responded to the expressive energies of places. And in their writing, they become tour guides. The best guides-like Pausanias-represented the whole integrity of places, not just objective description, but holistic description, not just shapes, but powers and feelings. They did not discard subjective collective experience. In the spirit of these guides I write.

My approach to description will be called a tropography. Tropography, in this case, means the mapping and description of symbolic turns that energize the meaning of a place. Description resulting in energized meaning is itself a trope, called enargia. Enargia's related tropes include a variety of -graphia ending tropes, including geographia, description of the earth. This project recognizes the way geography touches enargia, for it aims to explore the place of women in rhetoric and democracy. My tropography then is governed by enargia, vivid description, and geographia, description of the earth. It allows for geography, rather than history.<sup>3</sup> Geography allows one to map the place of rhetoric as a way of seeing its territory and as a way of seeing how it can be de/reterritorialized in and through woman and the feminine. As Walter points out, those who are close attendants to a place can be called *therapeutae*-connecting *theoria* to

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Deleuze (1987).

therapeia (21). As I theorize about rhetoric in the tradition of Pausanias, I act as therapeutae, offering therapeia to rhetoric as well as to democracy, and to woman.

This tropography will use what is called site planning. The site-plan discloses the orientations and relational dynamics between buildings and the lived experience of those at the site of these buildings. As anthropologists envision site planning, the concept refers to "the deliberate, self-conscious aspect of settlement planning" (Ashmore 272). In traditional societies, the resultant lay-outs frequently model some important ideal structure, often the structure of the human body or that of the universe. These layouts are not passive maps but rather actively map out the "architectonic ambience" in which the body politic should live and work. To study the site-plan of the Athenian agora reveals the structure of the ideal citizen. So the orientations of the site-plan of the Athenian agora will disclose not only the physical pathways of the lived experience of Athenian citizens in the agora, but the spiritual pathways as well. For example, most would agree that the Parthenon was the "center" of Athens. Frieda Brown and William B. Tyrrell state that "the Parthenon itself bears witness to the resources and power of the Athenian empire, while its mythmaking defines the image Athenians would project of themselves" (187). They go on to say that the myths spiriting the Parthenon and the space around it sends messages which:

admit no ambiguity and, when supported by the avarice of  
the demos, the bold recklessness of its leaders, and the  
might of its navy, they would terrify anyone who  
perceived, under the mask of the structure's graceful lines,

the fatal certainty of the Athenians that they were the  
civilizers of the world. (187).

The Parthenon's spiritual influence was so great, that other buildings were modeled after it in format, subject matter, style and manner of carving. For example, the Temple of Hephaistos was inspired by the Parthenon in its placement and perhaps also in the imagery of its gods (Neils). In the great building period of Periclean Athens, the Temple of Hephaistos was built on the Kolonos Agoraios, the crowning hill of the agora, dominating the space, in order to spirit it with the economic growth brought forward from the god Hephaistos' metal work, metallurgy being a significant dimension of Athenian economic well-being. Such growth was to no small degree made possible by deliberations. It is no accident that the Temple was placed to overlook all deliberations.

The example of the Temple of Hephaistos is an apt beginning for the study of the site-plan of rhetoric in the ancient agora for that which is in most immediate proximity to this Temple is the bouleterion, the very place of rhetoric and its principle art deliberation. The bouleterion was the prime beneficiary of the spiriting of this Temple. The place of the bouleterion had the most direct access to the spiriting powers of the Temple. No doubt that the Greeks would have recognized the spirit of Hephaistos' metal work for its market value, and no doubt as well that they would have recognized it for its most remarkable feat, namely the capturing of Aphrodite.

This excavation will ask what kind of collateral spiriting may have occurred through the Temple of Hephaistos. When looking at the Temple of Hephaistos, its architectural structure mimics that of the Parthenon, as stated above. And as one looks in all directions around the Temple, there are friezes depicting the mythic labors of Heracles



and of Theseus. The labors of Theseus were so significant to the subjective collective experience of the Temple that often the Temple was referred to as the Theseon. In fact, Theseus, who was called "this other Heracles," was one of the most prominent figures spiriting Athens. Leaders of the time portrayed him in a favorable light as the "Athenian national character," causing Athenians to dub him a "champion of freedom and benefactor of their democracy" (Brown & Tyrrell 171).

The myths of Heracles and Theseus played an obvious role in how Athenians perceived the ideal citizen. What becomes immediately obvious in observing these friezes is the particular configuration of the architectural design. This project focuses on Heracles since he is the principle figure, and the figure of Theseus is an amplification of Heracles. By conventional view, Heracles had 12 labors, and these labors occurred in the following order: 1) Nemean Lion; 2) Lernaean Hydra; 3) Cerynian Hind; 4) Erymanthian Boar; 5) Stables of Augeias; 6) Stymphalian Birds; 7) Cretan Bull; 8) Mares of Diomedes; 9) Hippolyte's Girdle; 10) Cattle of Geryon; 11) Apples of Hesperides; 12) Capture of Kerberos. However, the mythic depiction of these labors on the Temple of Hephaistos takes on a new configuration: 1) Nemean Lion; 2) Lernaean Hydra; 3) Cerynian Hind; 4) Erymanthian Boar; 5) Cretan Bull; 6) Mares of Diomedes; 7) Capture of Kerberos; 8) Hippolyte's Girdle; 9) Cattle of Geryon (which depicted in two metopes); and 10) Apples of Hesperides.

Three changes must be noted in this configuration, namely the disposition of the labors, with the Capture of Kerberos being disposed from the 12th labor to the 6th labor, the exclusion of particular labors, namely the Stables of Augeias and the Stymphalian Birds, and the doubling of the labors of Geryon. This configural pattern informs the

spiriting of the bouleterion in particular and strategic ways. Taking a closer look at each labor, as well as the complete configural pattern, will help explain its influence on the Athenian people.

The Lion-Heracles dominates the lion by gripping the lion around the neck, choking, and killing it. Although we see a sword, the myth explains that this is a bloodless domination in and through the grip. The myth also explains that Heracles in the end uses the claws of the lion to flay it, steal its impenetrable pelt, and wear it to prevent his own vulnerability.

The Hydra-Heracles dominates the Hydra with a companion first by searing the roots of the monster's heads to check the blood flow, and then severing the immortal head, killing the Hydra. The myth explains that Heracles steals the poisonous gall of the Hydra to use for his own protection in the future. Again we see here not only domination, but also bloodlessness, and the capture and trade of the powers of the other.

The Hind-Heracles dominates but does not kill the Hind. He forces it onto its haunches by pulling its horns back, exposing its throat. The myth explains that Heracles pinned her forelegs together with an arrow, which passed between bone and sinew, drawing no blood. The frieze does not show the weapon. The capture of the Hind is thought to represent the hunt for wisdom. The Hind, hence wisdom, is then kept alive as a captive. Again we see here not only domination, but bloodlessness, and the capture and trade of the powers of the other.

The Boar-Heracles dominates but does not kill the Boar. He turns it upside down, and the myth explains that he delivers it to the marketplace where another hand takes it over. Again we see here not only domination, bloodlessness, capture, and trade,

but also the particular kind of trade is different from that of the Lion, Hydra, and Hind. The boar symbolizes an economic trade, a marketplace exchange.

The Cretan Bull- Heracles captures the Cretan Bull, which was ravaging Crete by rooting up crops and leveling orchard walls. After a long struggle, and despite the fact that the Bull belches scorching flames, Heracles brings the monster to Eurystheus, who dedicates it to Hera. Hera loathes the gift because it redounds Heracles' glory, and drives the Bull elsewhere. Combat with a bull is one of the ritual tasks imposed on a candidate for kingship. Also, contact with the bull's horn is representative of fertility.

So far we have seen that in the labors of the Lion and the Hydra, the other is dominated and killed, and in the kill the powers of the other are captured and traded for the protection of the dominator, Heracles. From the Lion and the Hydra, our eye is moved to the Hind, the Boar, and the Bull, symbols of wisdom, wealth and fertility respectively. None are killed, but all three are captured and traded. The common thread through all five is bloodlessness, so regardless of whether Heracles kills the other or not, he has no blood on his hands, and the other, whether dead or alive, is dominated and traded.

The Mares-Heracles, with club in hand, upstaging the Mare, gripping its mane, appears to be dominating the Mare. However, the myth explains that the object of Heracles' club is not the Mare, but the Mare's owner, Diomedes. Heracles kills Diomedes, and captures his Mares. Upon capture, as the myth explains, the Mares come to know bit and bridle for the first time, hence their powers are harnessed. This frieze marks a significant shift in the depictions of the mythic labors. That which is the primary focus of domination and killing, namely Diomedes, is excluded from the frieze. And the

power that Heracles captures, namely the Mares, is depicted, unlike the impenetrable flayed lion skin, the gall of the Hydra, the wisdom of the Hind, and the wealth of the Boar. The significance of this depiction is brought into bold relief when we attend to the mythic association, according Robert Graves, between wild women and horses (2: 124).

Kerberos-Heracles, with only the assistance of a chain, leads the Kerberos dog out of Hades, as he is directed to do so without club or arrow. The leading of the dog, follows from the leading of the Mares of Diomedes, to mark a domination characterized more by leading and disciplining more than by overpowering and killing.

Note that the body of Heracles in relation to the Mare and the Dog stands in sharp contrast to the body of Heracles in relation to the Lion, Hydra, Hind, and Boar. To consider for example his body in relation to the Hind, the body leans into and on the Hind, whereas the body leans away from the dog, as in a leading or guiding. This frieze continues the radical shift begun with the Mares of Diomedes from previous images of domination. Our gazes shift from violent, albeit bloodless, domination to moderate domination in the form of leading. As well, we see in the leading of the Kerberos Dog, another image of woman, in that woman in mythic Greek culture is often associated with the dog, as we see in the epithet bitch-eyed Helen and bitch-eyed Aphrodite (Friedrich 146). Moreover, that the slobber of the dog produces magic plants that can either heal or harm presents another association with woman. This association derives from a wealth of evidence that the feminine power was linked to drug-like plants, as in the Thessalonian witches in the manufacturing of their flying ointment with the plant aconite produced from the slobber of the Kerberos dog, to Helen's use of drugs in the *Odyssey*, to the power of Aphrodite who bears the epithet *Mandagoritis*, a stupefying drug-like plant.

This makes sense given that Greeks thought in analogies and dichotomies. Men saw themselves as male, Greek and non-animal. The opposite of this, then, is female, barbarian, and animal. We see Heracles opposing the barbarian world.

Hippolyte's Girdle-Continuing the visual shift from violent to moderate domination, we see in this frieze Heracles with his foot pinning the leg of the Queen of the Amazons, reaching for her girdle as she gazes at him preparing to hand it over. From the conventional myth, we are told that she is prepared to hand over the girdle on account of her attraction to Heracles. Whereas with the previous two friezes, the Mare and the Dog, the dominated are figures of woman, this frieze portrays a woman literally. The significance of the Amazon Queen's gift of the girdle arises from the reversal of gender roles. The girdle symbolizes woman as warrior and governor and man as household keeper (2: 125). According to Graves, "the victories over the Amazons secured by Heracles . . . record, in fact, setbacks to the matriarchal system in Greece . . ." (2: 131).

The Cattle of Geryon-This mythic labor is anomalous, depicted in two metopes. The first metope, the only one not depicting Heracles, shows only the image of Geryon, as a three bodied man, linked at the waist. In this metope one sees Geryon attacking, defending, and relinquishing. In the second metope one sees Geryon dead on the ground, with Heracles standing above him bending his bow, the weapon that brought Geryon's death. The anomaly elaborates as we recognize that not only is this the only mythic labor doubled in the frieze but that it is the only one that does not depict that actual labor, namely the driving away of Geryon's cattle. This metope doubled depicts only Geryon and his murder. How does one make sense of this? If we follow the overall procession of the labors, we can compare this to the procession of the friezes of the

Parthenon. On the Parthenon we see a gradual separation of man from beasts, amazon women, and foreigners. The same is true for the Temple of Hephaistos, as Heracles gradually separates himself from beasts, amazon women, and foreigners, Geryon being the embodiment of foreigner. The killing of Geryon seems so important to depict in the anomalous way in which it is depicted because it marks the final separation of the hero from beasts, women, and foreigners. With this final separation, civilization can proceed. We know from the myth that the bent bow Heracles holds symbolizes ruling and governing. With this power of governance, Heracles drives away Geryon's cattle. And this cattle drive becomes symbolic of the creation of civilization. As Heracles drives the cattle he civilizes all he encounters, whether abolishing barbarous customs, slaughtering wild beasts so as to give a country unsurpassed fertility, or creating roads.

The Golden Apples of Hesperides-This metope, like the previous two, does not feature the actual labor. Whereas the depiction of the Cattle of Geryon features the preparation for the labor of driving the cattle, namely the killing of Geryon, the depiction of the Golden Apples of Hesperides features the final outcome of the labor, namely the delivery of the golden apples cunningly stolen from Atlas, and delivered to Athene. In this depiction of the delivery, we see Heracles adorned with symbols of the captured powers of the other. The delivery of the golden apples seems to symbolize the fruits of Heracles' labors, and their delivery to Athene, and the overall depiction of Heracles as the ideal citizen, seems to symbolize the civilization of Athens. This final frieze associates the human, Heracles, more with the divine than with the bestial thus completing the spiritual procession, the arrival, of the ideal citizen.

Although the above labors were described individually for their unique representation of domination and supremacy, a few symbols are similar in all of the metopes. For example, the stances of both Heracles and Theseus on the metopes around the Temple of Hephaistos mirror the distinct stances of the statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, who were given credit for being the first to give their lives in an attempt to free Athens from tyranny in 514 BC. Susan Woodford points out that these men were “glorious representatives of the Athenian love of freedom and of the Athenian democracy, and it must have been with this glamorous aura that they were adapted for use in representations of Theseus” (151). Once again, Heracles and Theseus are characterized as Athenian heroes and models for the Athenian citizen. Another common link between the metopes of Heracles is the ease at which he appears to be dominating these strong and will-full women, beasts and foreigners. In many other depictions of Heracles, one notices “obvious exhaustion” as he is shown “in a very human light, tired out by his seemingly endless labours” (Woodford 19). It seems that Heracles being shown effortlessly dominating creatures in every metope is just another symbol of his might. Although this may be slight, every part of these metopes is crucial to communicating the story. Woodford points out that:

discord, desire and persuasion are eloquent abstractions and often powerful motivations that propel myths to their conclusion. To show such invisible forces at work artists would sometimes resort to personification (human figures supposed to embody an emotion or state of mind and labeled

in order to make the point clear) to convey ideas that could not otherwise be seen by the naked eye (171).

So, not only do the metopes individually give examples of domination, they all have certain similar aspects that heighten the image of Heracles as the Athenian national hero. In this way, they are images of cultural communication, particularly persuasion.

What we have seen thus far is that which is amplified. But my description cannot end with a vivid description of only that which is amplified. If we were to leave the spiriting to these included labors, or even add to them the included labors of Theseus, we would be doing nothing more than describing the amplification of the patriarchal configuration of the ideal citizen and the nature of civilization spiriting the place and space of rhetoric. However, as mentioned above, that which is amplified is not the whole of the story. In the space of rhetoric, much is lurking. Tropographically speaking, that which lurks is emphasized. Emphasis, in the Greek tradition of tropes and figures, is the opposite of amplification. Emphasis, as Quintilian puts it, excites some suspicion to indicate that meaning is other than the words would seem to imply, not in a contrary sense as in irony, but rather a meaning that lurks (latent) there for the hearer to discover (9.2.65).

To see holistically the emphatic spirit of domination in the space of rhetoric, we need only to turn to the myth of Ares and Aphrodite, for this myth lurks in the spiriting of space. Whereas the Temple of Hephaistos dominates the agora, at the bottom of the hill and across the road from the bouleterion, to the east stands the Temple of Ares, and to the north the Temple of Aphrodite. The resulting configuration in the site plan is that of a



triangle. This triangle is a famous triangle, as known in the myth of Ares, Aphrodite, and Hephaistos.

In this myth made famous in Homer's *Odyssey*, Hephaistos learns from the sun that Aphrodite, his wife, is having an affair with Ares. So Hephaistos fashions an invisible net made out of gold with strength unbreakable by even the gods, and he covers the bed of the lovers. When Aphrodite and Ares attempt to lay together, they become ensnared in the net, and frozen in place by the strength of its bonds. All the gods gather around and laugh at the two caught lovers. Except Poseidon, who doesn't laugh. Instead he gazes upon Aphrodite smitten with desire for her, and he offers to pay Hephaistos the cost of the bride-prize for her freedom. The economic exchange takes place, and Aphrodite is released to Poseidon. Aphrodite then goes on to repay Poseidon's gift by pleasing him along with his friends and bearing their children.

If Hephaistos is known for his metallurgy, then indeed he is known for his most excellent application of his art to capture Aphrodite. In his trade with Poseidon, his metal work does indeed lead to securing his economic well-being. I will explore the collateral spiriting of the Temple of Hephaistos in and through the capture of and trade in Aphrodite, the figure of woman. I take seriously that the capture and trade of women was a part of the subjective collective experience in classical Athens, the official birthplace of rhetoric. Whereas in the included labors of Heracles one saw amplification of a certain kind of capture and trade of the other, including a monster like woman, the Queen of the Amazons, in this excluded myth of Aphrodite, one sees an emphasis, a lurking, of a certain kind of capture and trade of not just the ambiguous other, that is primarily depicted in and through the bestial, but the unambiguous woman,

anthropomorphized and embodied as a wife. The combination of the amplified and emphatic mythic culture of the Temple of Hephaistos spirits the place and space of rhetoric in and through not only the capture and trade in the other in general, but in Woman in particular.

Having now seen the ways in which the domination and trade of woman figures in both amplificatory and emphatic ways in the space of rhetoric, I am motivated to figure this space differently. If we want to talk about the creation of a new space, we must recognize that tropes are never stable movements in unidirectional ways. They turn, twist, move, and change. If this tropography of the Temple has revealed a particular configuration of the spirit of the space of rhetoric, we need to see that configuration as a choice. We can choose to see otherwise.

Tropography can again be used as a means by which to create positive change. By attending to different tropes, or attending to standard tropes differently, my work will create a change that embraces radical otherness. Harold Bloom (qtd. in White) suggests that a trope “is always not only a deviation *from* one possible, proper meaning, but also a deviation *towards* another meaning, conception, or ideal of what is right and proper *and true* ‘in reality’ (2). So, my work will illuminate tropes that allow for the possibility of turning meaning and cultural dynamics toward otherness, rather than sustaining an inflexible, patriarchal foundation.

Although the metopes, temples and myths that have been critiqued above are inhospitable to women, there are ways to dispose the labors otherwise, by rearranging their order, redefining the included and excluded to see the images otherwise and create a space that is hospitable to women. For example, looking at the metope of Heracles and

the Nemean Lion, we automatically see what our consciousness sees, what is amplified: Heracles dominating the lion while holding a sword. If open to other possibilities, however, we may notice the lion's rear leg pushing away from Heracles. His front paw pushes the sword down so that it is no longer a threat, and the lion would then be able to spring out from under Heracles' grip to freedom. In this way, we make new images out of the old.

Next, the metope of Heracles and his companion seems to be one of absolute domination of the hydra. Instead of seeing what is amplified, the weapon each man holds while one grips the hydra's neck, notice the hydra's weapon. The hydra has one of the man's legs wrapped within its muscular body, and the option of wrapping or tripping the other man with his tail. Knowing the strength of creatures who are capable of asphyxiation, it seems that the hydra will be liberated at any point that it deems necessary.

Further, consider the image of the hunt for wisdom in the Cerynian Hind. Instead of seeing wisdom captured and traded by Heracles, the ideal patriarchal citizen, what we might see is the energy of the hind's rearing. Notice the front legs rearing upwards in a movement that counters or resists the movement of Heracles, so that Heracles may himself be sliding off the back of the hind, losing his control over wisdom.

Moving on we see Heracles' pursuit of wealth in the Erymanthian Boar. We first notice Heracles' strength as he attempts to throw the boar down onto a table. If we look at what else may be going on this metope, we become aware of a hand reaching out of the table. It doesn't seem that this hand is in anyway attempting to grab the boar, as it

is outstretched, reaching. Instead, this hand seems to be reaching for the calf of Heracles in order to move his leg off the table, and make him lose his grip of the boar. Then, the boar will not fall with such force and it will be able to escape domination.

The metope of Heracles and the Cretan bull is a blatant representation of Heracles' journey toward immortality and heroism. Rethinking this metope, however, we may notice the bull, with its forelegs up in the air, as if he is ready to jump. Heracles, then, would fall to the ground, as he is already leaning backwards. The Bull's scorching flames would also be a threat to Heracles, whose impenetrable pelt does not protect his entire body.

Looking at the metope of Heracles dominating one of the mares, we immediately see Heracles' strong upper body as he prepares to strike the mare with his blunt weapon. By looking closer, however, we see even greater strength in the mare. As he lowers himself on his hind legs, his front legs look as if he is about to leap out of the picture. Given the power and willfulness we see in the mare, the fact that Heracles tries to control him by gripping his mane is almost laughable.

Next, the myth explains that Heracles is leading Kerberos out of the cave with a rope. If we put emphasis on the rope and Heracles' stance, however, a different scene comes to mind. If Kerberos were going voluntarily, Heracles would not need a rope, and he certainly would not need the safety grip he has created by wrapping the rope twice in his hand. It also seems that given Heracles' stance, he is using great force to pull Kerberos, and therefore Kerberos must not want to be led. In fact, one of Kerberos' paws seems to be reaching out to Heracles' calf, giving him the opportunity to scratch Heracles. The sudden pain of such an injury would surely cause Heracles to loosen his

grip, allowing Kerberos to retreat back into his two-sided cave and escape through the other side.

As we look at the metope of Heracles and Hippolyte, we immediately see his foot, as it appears to be holding her down. If we look at what else is going on in the picture, we may notice Hippolyte holding part of her girdle as if taking it off. If she is removing her girdle with that hand, why is her other hand behind her back? Perhaps for the same reason all suspects are told to put their hands in the air! And knowing that she is a warrior, it seems reasonable to think that she would have some form of protection hidden. This would also explain why although she appears to be sitting on the ground at first glance, she is actually sitting on her knees, with her feet in a position to spring up. It appears that Heracles' mere foot will not be enough to dominate this woman experienced in war and win her girdle.

Two metopes of Geryon come next in this procession. In the first picture, we see a three-bodied Geryon attacking, defending and relinquishing. Our eyes are immediately drawn to the fallen man, and we probably take this as a sign of defeat and conquering. Notice, however, that the dead or wounded body of Geryon has no protection, while the other two bodies of Geryon have somehow gotten their hands on Heracles' stolen powers: the impenetrable pelt and his shield. Knowing that Heracles no longer has his powers, and that Geryon now holds these impenetrable weapons, it seems possible that Geryon will in fact be able to defend himself.

The second metope of Geryon seems to be a simple picture depicting Heracles standing over Geryon after having killed him. The myth explains that Geryon dies from a bow, which symbolizes governing and ruling, and so Heracles is then able to take over as

the civilizer of Athens. Looking closer at this metope, however, we do not see a bow in Geryon, who is supposed to be dead. Further, Geryon's left hand is lifted and his feet seem to be positioning him to a point where his legs will have power and mobility. His hand and his right leg (at least) would fall to the ground if he were dead, given they would have no support to stay up. So, it seems, since Geryon is on the ground that Heracles believes that he is dead, and is focusing on others. Geryon, now, will be able to grab Heracles with his left arm and trip him over his legs, causing Heracles to fall on his back and Geryon to either escape or fight Heracles until he is able to escape.

The last metope shows Heracles giving the apples of Hesperides to Athene. As noted earlier, these apples become a symbol that Heracles has completed all of his labors, and will now gain immortality. In return, Athene gives Heracles an olive branch, which symbolizes both Athens and peace. This final metope is perhaps the most striking of the procession. Heracles' domination of the other has clearly gone from barbaric, hand-to-hand combat to a more civilized, humane leading. It is not until this final metope, however, that it becomes clear how domination can be completely masked in the notion of the civic space. How can this hospitable exchange of gifts between Heracles and Athene be dominating?

Well, ever since the groundbreaking work done by Marcel Mauss, anthropologists, linguists, philosophers, and rhetorical theorists alike have been studying gift culture. Whereas a gift is normally seen as pleasant, its etymology points out that a gift means both remedy and poison. According to Mauss, gifts actually "[link] magically, religiously, morally, juridically, the giver and the receiver. Coming from one person, made or appropriated by him, being from him, it gives him power over the other who

accepts it” (29). So, the act of gift giving can be an act of domination. Although Heracles and Athene are exchanging gifts, it is still embedded in a system of domination and patriarchy, framed as an act of hospitality. One sees here that the power structures and oppression inherent in traditional rhetoric are completely masked and seem civil, even more so than the domination within the other labors of Heracles, as this one does not even show obvious conflict. Domination and persuasion present within the gift is silent because, as Marshall Sahlins explains, the gift is an “alliance, solidarity, communion—in brief, peace” (84). Again, domination is easy to overlook when it is peaceful, covert, and inviting. What can seem more peaceful than Athene handing an olive branch, which actually symbolizes peace, to Heracles.

This exchange of gifts takes place in what Georges Bataille calls a restricted economy. A restricted economy is a closed system of production and reproduction. The existence of the system relies on people becoming “things” by repressing desires, freedom and spontaneity in the name of future progress and achievement. People constantly produce within this economy and all excess must then be reinvested within the same economy, allowing the people to progress and the system to survive. This makes sense, given that Heracles’ “sacrifice” of the other is not a true sacrifice, as he reinvests the power he steals from the other in order to use it for himself in the future. Further, all of the labors are performed so Heracles can achieve immortality in the future. His “giving” the apples to Athene is not a pure gift, but rather the proof of his labors so that he can then be rewarded.

Bataille explains that this causes the human to become a thing, a commodity, as “the introduction of *labor* into the world replaced intimacy, the depth of desire and its

free outbreaks, with rational progression, where what matters is no longer the truth of the present moment, but, rather, the subsequent results of *operations*” (57). The final metope proves this point, as it is the only metope that does not record the actual labor, the actual domination. Instead, it represents the results of the labors, the achievement of Heracles and his advancement toward immortality.

Further, the need for people to establish an identity by negating the other is clear within a restricted economy, and supported by Heracles’ labors, in that identity measures one’s value, and one’s value determines everything. Michelle Ballif explains that sacrificing the other in a restricted economy “is not a sending without return, not an expenditure without an investment. The return is presence and identity; the investment is order and control. The sacrifice is the gift that keeps on giving back” (91). The sacrifice of the other, then, is not a true sacrifice because there is always a return. The other is a *thing* with an exchange value, and so the domination of the other has the promise of a certain value of return. Heracles’ identity as the hero of Athens is created through his domination of the other. He could not have civilized Athens, therefore becoming the ideal citizen, without first dominating and trading the powers of the other so that he could use them for himself.

In order to “rethink” this final metope, one must think outside of a restricted economy. Ballif’s use of gift theory through Bataille is a commitment to escaping what she calls the “sick logic of the polis” (90) within a restricted economy. She wants rhetoric to turn from a restricted economy into a general economy. This turn is marked by a shift from production to expenditure.



Bataille's account of general economy offers a way to erupt from the closed system of production in a restricted economy. This eruption is as Ballif describes a "profound freedom...given in destruction, whose essence is to consume *profitlessly* whatever might remain in the progression of useful works" (58). In this general economy, sacrifice takes a radically other form:

Sacrifice destroys that which it consecrates. It does not have to destroy as fire does; only the tie that connected the offering to the world of profitable activity is severed; the consecrated offering cannot be restored to the *real* order.

This principle opens the way to passionate release (58).

So, sacrifice is no longer a means by which the subject reinforces his dominance by controlling and constraining the energy of the other. Instead, sacrifice moves or turns toward a freedom of erotic expenditure in which nothing is calculated, ordered or measured. Here, sacrifice will not provide a return, and thus does not result in progress and advancement. Rather, sacrifice is a total waste, not in a negative way, but in a way that allows the individual to do something without the expectation of return. The individual is not trapped within a system that places an exchange value on everything, thus requiring everything to be done in order to gain value. This new gift and new sacrifice, then, do not limit people to live in a world in which their lives are planned on an ever-stable continuum. Instead, they can see other possibilities, other ways of living and other people through other rhetorics. Here, the importance of providing another space is clear, for in order to turn toward otherness, one must turn away from the space of domination. This turning away, or breaking away, is unmistakable in the metopes on the

Temple of Hephaistos. Each woman, beast and foreigner physically twists and turns his or her body in an effort to escape the straight, unmoving structure of domination, as it is embodied in Heracles.

It is also possible, in fact necessary, to rethink the implicit domination within the myth of Hephaistos and Aphrodite. As mentioned previously, Hephaistos traps his wife Aphrodite in bed with her lover Ares. Seeing her trapped, the Gods gather around and laugh at her. They would have laughed her to death towards the end of symbolically killing the woman who disrupts the order of the polis.

In order to rethink this myth, Diane Davis' work can be used as a way for Aphrodite to escape the domination within traditional rhetoric by moving to a general economy, "to inhabit an **exscripted** space, to be written *out* of the 'battle' altogether, if only for instants, moments, hijacked flashes" (156). For Davis, one way out, even if momentarily, is laughter. Davis explains that a "giving laughter" will break through the boundaries of a restricted economy. She describes giving laughter as:

a laughter that participates in and then moves beyond  
Bataille's (cum Mauss's) 'potlatch'—it gives itself up  
without respect for limits, and, in doing so, its limits end up  
giving way; the binary structure overflows, explodes in a  
burst of laughter. A giving laughter laughs its way out of  
the 'circle of constraint' and into *general* economy; it  
celebrates the play of the universe by *joining in its co(s)mic*  
*Laughter* (63).

A giving laughter, then, is able to escape domination because it involves giving within a general economy, which is not used to negate the other. This giving laughter does not serve to appropriate or legitimate the laugher.

Giving laughter is only one type of laughter. With other types of laughter, such as deceitful laughter, insincere laughter, or the laughter of Hephaistos' friends, which are used to reinforce systems of power, the other can be laughed at, laughed over or laughed to death. This laughter is distinctly different from the laughter associated with Aphrodite. In fact, one of her epithets is "the laughing goddess" or the "goddess of laughter." As the embodiment of Eros she exudes what Davis calls (*cum Bataille*) a giving laughter.

A giving laughter, therefore, laughs at traditional rhetoric's master/slave dialectic. It doesn't accept a person either as existing through legitimation or not existing through negation because it "performs an affirmative deconstruction by overflowing the limits of negation" (64). And it most certainly does not accept the stern and serious foundations that maintain traditional rhetoric. Instead, giving laughter laughs that anyone might actually be able to glorify these stable foundations without also cracking a smile. Thus, Aphrodite can laugh her way into a general economy.

To rethink each metope and myth is not enough. An entirely new procession of these metopes must also be created which disrupts the traditional procession of the domination and trade of other—beasts, women, and foreigners. When looking at the first metopes in this strategic procession, domination is so obvious. Heracles is gripping these animals and in many cases is holding a weapon. Then the domination becomes more civil, and therefore more transparent. One sees Athens as a place civilized by its hero Heracles. This has become a consciousness. But one must remember that in actuality the

move from inhumane capturing to civil capturing is but a disguise for the same kind of domination. So, in order to make this domination visible, and create a consciousness that is aware of power imbalances, the procession must be reversed. In other words, the procession must start with Heracles giving the apples to Athene, which is the final form of domination, and move backwards until the final metope is of Heracles dominating the Nemean Lion. Why? Because this way the procession starts with the masking of domination, the domination that one does not see because it is not apparent. Then, the procession slowly moves toward more obvious forms of domination. At the end, one sees the clear, inhumane domination of the nemean lion, thus recreating a consciousness.

This is much the same way the beginning of this paper uses critical historiography to show people that, domination, though civil and transparent, does exist. Although it may seem that this procession is moving backwards, ending with a type of inhumane domination, it is actually just recognizing the power struggle. The last metope, then, is not a solution, but an acknowledgment of an ever-present domination, and acknowledging the fight that must come against such domination.

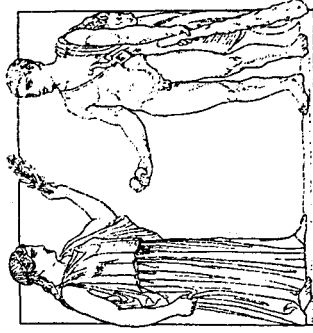
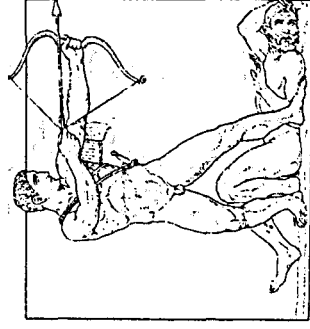
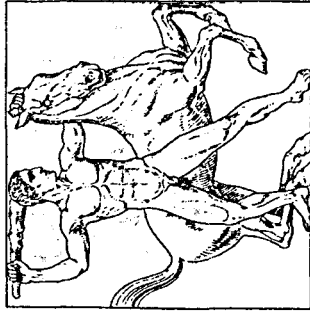
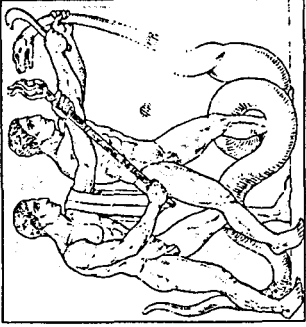
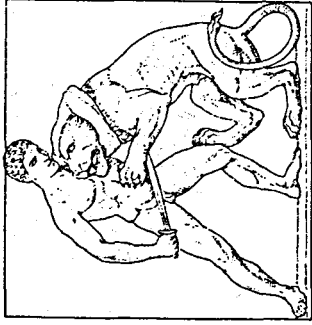
So, people all have the resources to turn their thinking otherwise. Michel Serres, a noted French polymath and cultural critic, explains that seemingly insignificant occurrences can either sustain or disrupt a system when he states that “such and such a circumstance, unforeseen and slight, converts or perverts. Small circumstances, randomly distributed, are to the chain of things what little perceptions are to feeling” (19). Remarkably, he illuminates this point by going to the labors of Heracles:

Unfortunately, it is a question of bifurcations. *Quod vitae sectabor iter*: will Heracles pick the path of virtue or vice?

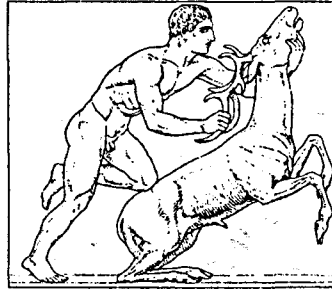
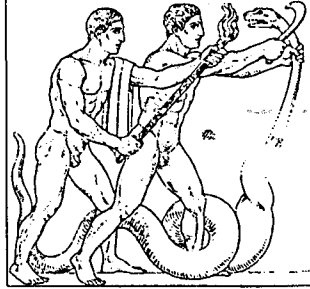
In the beginning, it does not matter much, but during the labors, it could matter quite a lot. Rewrite the twelve labors having supposed that the hero chose the path of vice. Often a little flick is sufficient for a decision to be made. Heads or tails, a book opened at random (19).

Serres makes clear that it is possible that the labors of Heracles may not be the labors of a hero pursuing virtue. Each metope has numerous parts that can be interpreted in other ways, depending on how noise is regarded. Laughter, then, is a noise, as is the paw of the Nemean lion, the rearing of the hind, the paw of Kerberos and the hand of Hippolyte. Each of these noises gives reason to read the labors of Heracles in ways other than the “pure and heroic” standard representations. Reexamining these labors, pointing out alternate areas of interest, and laughing allows us to break the silence that masks the domination within traditional rhetoric “with a gesture of vociferous militancy” (Chisholm qtd. in Davis 148).

# Procession of Metopes on the Temple of Hephaistos

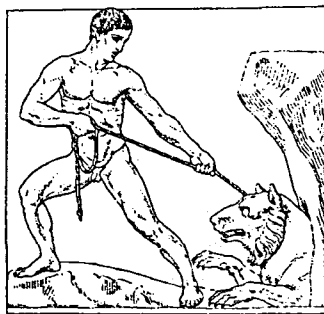
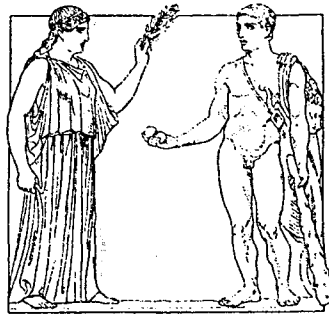
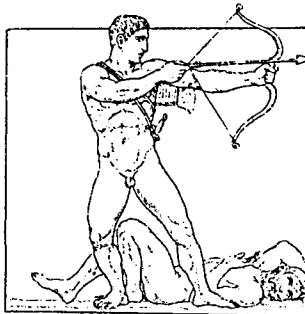


# Labors Not Depicted

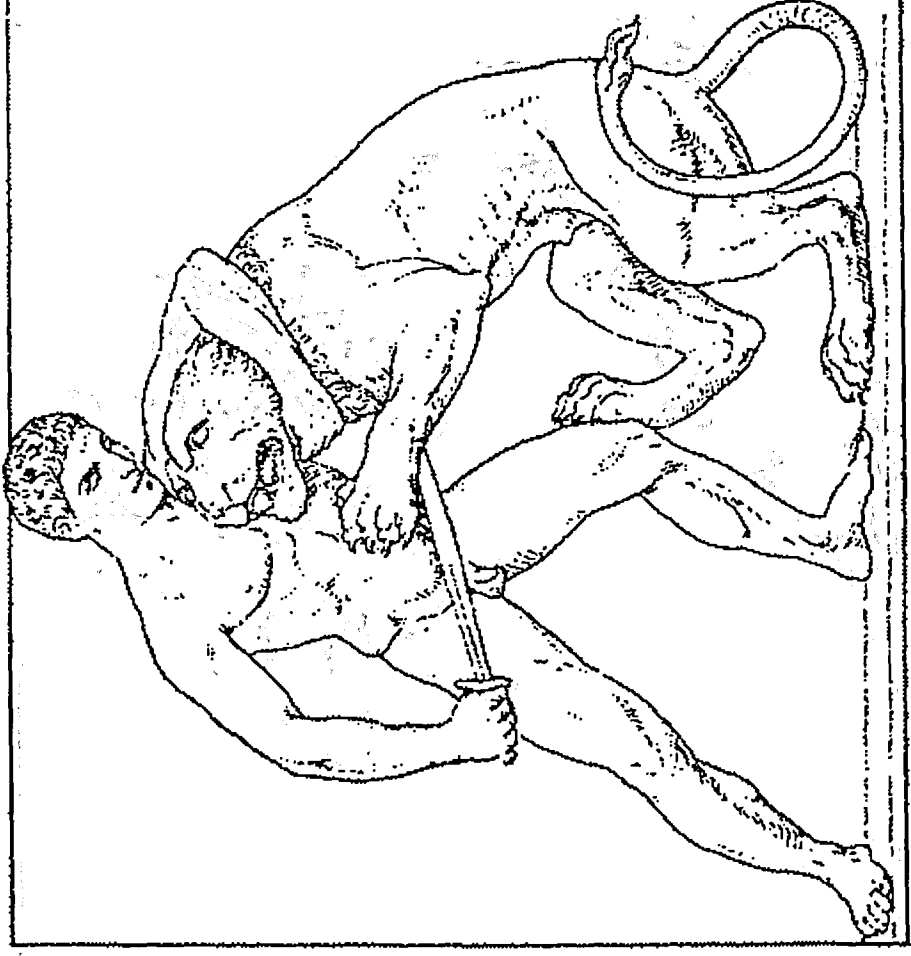


Labor #5  
Stables of  
Augias

Labor #6  
Stymphalian  
Birds

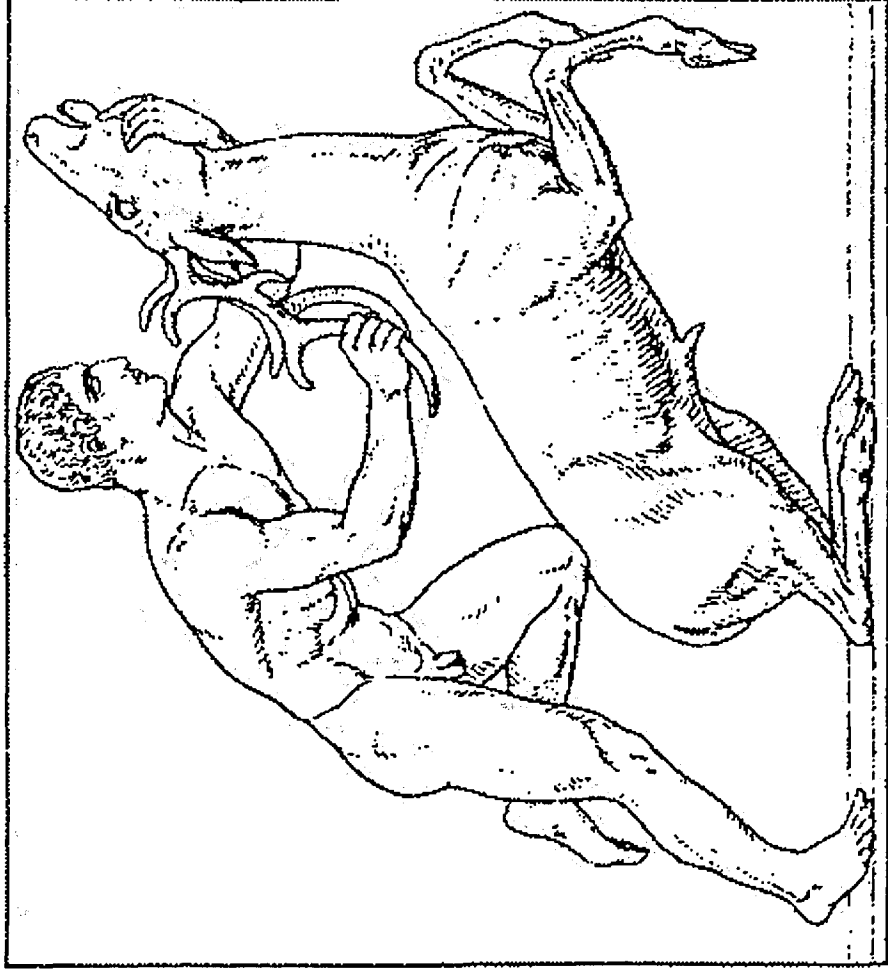


# Metope of Heracles and the Nemean Lion

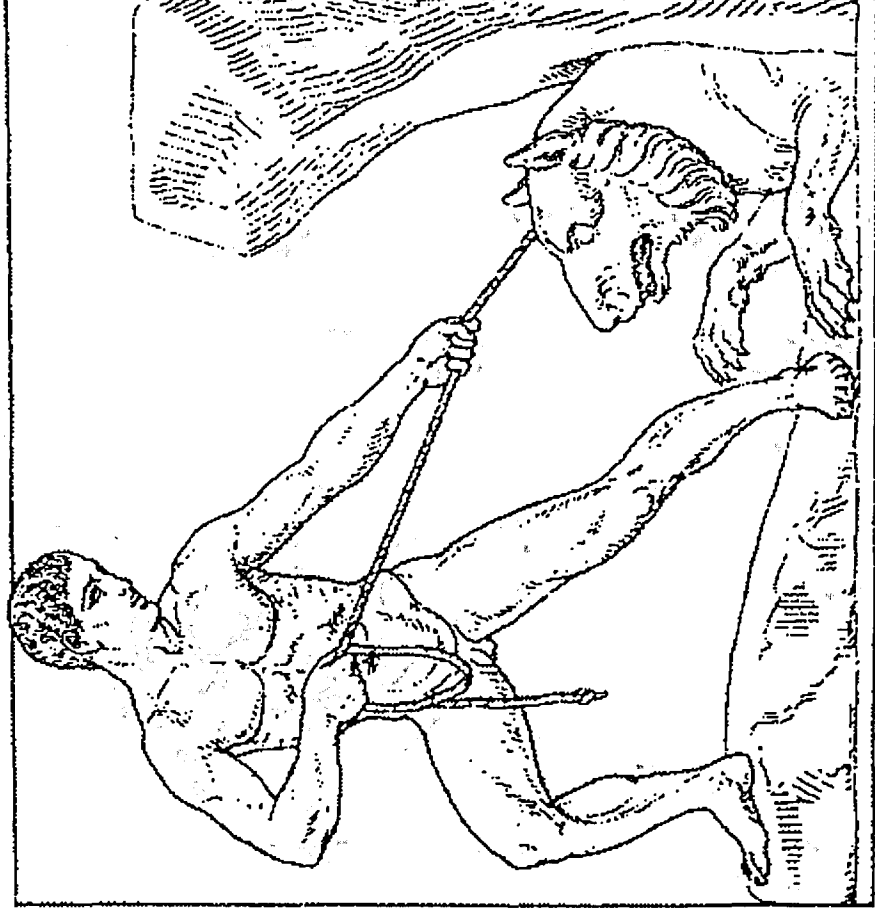




# Metope of Heracles and the Ceryneian Hind



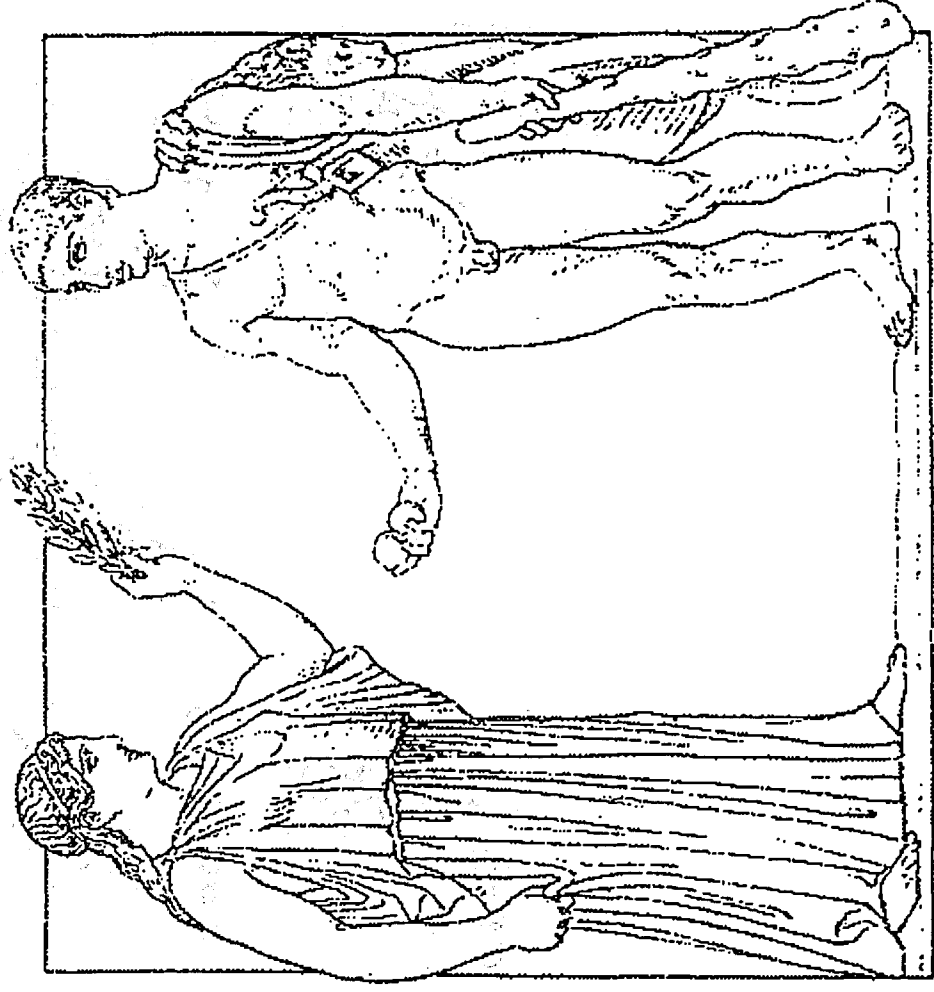
# Metope of Heracles and Kerberos



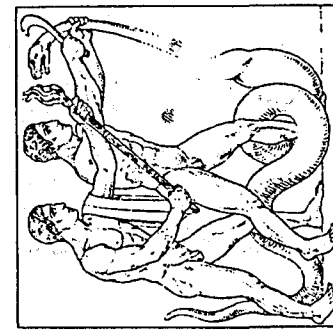
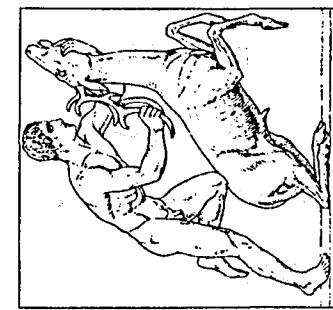
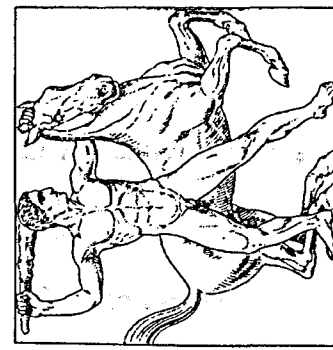
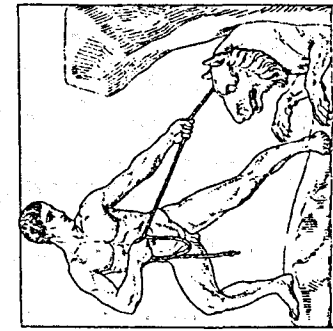
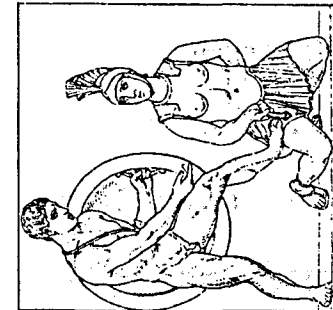
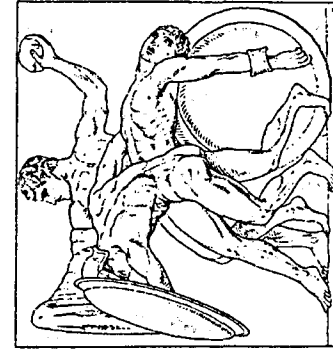
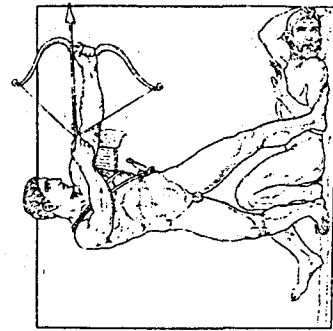
# Metope of Heracles and the Queen of the Amazons



# Metope of Heracles and Athene



# Re-configuration of Metopes



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